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# THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

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## Educational News and Editorial Comment

### EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The September and October issues of the *Elementary School Journal* are out of print. The articles by Professor Parker, for which there is an unusual demand, will be reprinted. These articles make a stimulating handbook on the teaching of primary reading. Single copies of the reprint, including four articles, the last of which is the article appearing in this issue, will be supplied for 40 cents, postpaid. When ordered in lots of 25 or more, up to 100, the price will be 35 cents per copy. In lots of 100 or more the price will be 30 cents per copy.

The editors of the *Elementary School Journal* take this opportunity to announce articles on project teaching by Professor Parker, which will appear in the January and February numbers.

A series of articles on the teaching of handwriting in the primary grades is in preparation by Professor Freeman and will begin in January.

A series of articles on the expansion of the elementary curriculum, by Professor Judd, will begin in March.

### EDUCATIONAL FINANCE INQUIRY

The American Council on Education announces the appointment of a commission to conduct a comprehensive investigation of

educational finance in the United States. For several years legislators, philanthropists, and the general public have been aware of the increasing difficulty of supporting public schools and universities. Educational officers have come to regard the problem of financing education as the outstanding problem now before them. The paramount importance of the matter was emphasized at the citizen's conference on education called by the United States Commissioner of Education in 1920. This conference passed resolutions urging a thorough investigation of the cost of education and of public resources available to support it. A group of the leaders of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association meeting in Atlantic City, February, 1921, likewise designated this problem as the most vital one now confronting school administrators and appointed a committee to assist in launching an investigation if means might be found to carry it on.

The American Council on Education has obtained contributions for this purpose, and it is now assured of funds sufficient to undertake such an investigation on a scale never before attempted. A total of one hundred and seventy thousand dollars has been appropriated for the study by the Commonwealth Fund, the Carnegie Corporation, the General Education Board, and the Milbank Memorial Fund. The council has appointed a commission composed of recognized specialists in education, taxation, and business to conduct the inquiry. The commission consists of the following persons: Samuel P. Capen, director of the American Council on Education, Washington, D.C., ex officio; Ellwood P. Cubberley, dean of the School of Education, Stanford University; Edward C. Elliott, chancellor of the University of Montana; Thomas E. Finegan, state superintendent of public instruction, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Robert M. Haig, associate professor of business organization, Columbia University; Victor Morawetz, attorney at law, New York City; Henry C. Morrison, formerly state superintendent of public instruction of New Hampshire, professor of education, University of Chicago; George D. Strayer, professor of educational administration and director, Division of Field Studies, Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, Columbia University; Herbert S. Weet, superintendent of schools, Rochester, New York.

Dr. Strayer has been selected as chairman of the commission and director of the work of the inquiry.

It is generally recognized that during the past decade all kinds of public schools have developed and expanded in an extraordinary manner. The war seemed to stimulate rather than to retard the growth of every grade of instruction given at public expense. What will it cost to support on a uniform basis a system of public education as at present organized? In what way can this undertaking, especially in the rural regions, be reconciled with the other obligations entailed by the conduct of the public's vital concerns? Educational workers and public-spirited citizens throughout the country have agreed that the issue has become one of cold, hard facts.

The primary aims of the Educational Finance Inquiry will be to study in typical states and communities the existing program of public education, the extent to which this program is carried out, and the present and prospective costs involved. It is proposed to investigate the relation of educational expenditures to other necessary governmental expenditures, the methods of raising revenue for the support of education, the possibility of effecting economies, and the possible sources of revenue not now utilized for the support of education.

#### HEALTH EDUCATION

The editors of the *Elementary School Journal* and the officers of the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund are gratified at the reception which has been accorded the series of health articles which have appeared since September. The blanks and other material mentioned in these articles may be secured from the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund, 848 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois. This organization will be glad to have reports from schools carrying on health work or to furnish suggestions to those desiring to start such work.

It is evident to anyone who keeps in contact with school news that the general interest in health instruction is increasing. The attitude of teachers and principals used to be that the pupil's health was a matter for the family to supervise. If the school taught the pupil the three R's, its duty was done. In these days the evidence is clear that, even from the strictly instructional point

of view, the school must pay attention to health. Pupils who are undernourished are irregular in attendance. They are irritable and supply most of the disciplinary cases. They are unable to concentrate attention on their studies and contribute very largely to the failure list.

There is a principal of a school known to the writer who expressed himself somewhat more than a year ago as little interested in undernourishment and kindred problems. When urged to do something in the matter of health teaching, he answered that the curriculum was crowded and the teachers were busy. He tolerantly allowed the pupils to be weighed, however, and had on his desk a list of those who were shown to be below normal. At the end of the school year this same principal had on his desk, as every systematic administrator should, a list of the pupils who had been unable to keep up with their work and a list of the pupils who had been the subjects of serious school discipline during the preceding months. On looking over the lists he found that they were almost identical.

The result of this discovery is that the school in question is energetically pursuing a health program.

#### LIBRARY ASSOCIATION LIST OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The American Library Association, 78 East Washington Street, Chicago, has prepared a list of children's books which it recommends for purchase. The list is annotated so that anyone interested may secure information about the books listed. The list will be supplied to libraries and will serve as a very useful guide to those who wish to make up collections of juvenile literature or to make single purchases.

#### CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES

The second of a series of four pamphlets on "The Schools of Your City" has just been issued by the Civic Development Department of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. This latest pamphlet deals with "School Buildings and Equipment."

"Better schools mean better business and better citizenship," says the pamphlet. "But if they are to mean this, then 'better schools' must include all schools, those in the poorest districts,

those where aliens predominate quite as much as those in the most prosperous residence districts."

"The purpose of the pamphlet," it is pointed out, "is to aid members of chambers of commerce in learning the facts as to the schools in which the children of their community receive the training designed to make them more effective workers and citizens. It will help them to assure themselves that there are no schools in their town of which they need be ashamed, or, if there are such schools, aid them to work effectively to bring these schools up to an American standard. It also is designed to demonstrate what standard may be taken as typically American by showing what has been accomplished and by quoting from leading authorities."

The things discussed in the pamphlet are location and grounds, school buildings, classrooms and equipment, corridors, stairways, lighting, ventilation, water supply and drinking fountains, heating system, and fire protection.

#### HISTORY PRIZES

The Knights of Columbus Historical Commission, 199 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts, announces a series of five prizes for the best studies based on research in primary sources in the field of American history. The prize for contestants in Class D amounts to \$1,000 and is open to school superintendents and teachers in the United States. The studies in this class are to be limited to "the consideration of history curricula in both elementary and advanced schools as co-ordinated with aims in the citizenship and national responsibility."

A pamphlet setting forth the conditions of the contest and describing the periods which may be studied is issued by the commission and may be had on application.

#### CONSERVATION OF SIGHT

The Eyesight Conservation Council of America has issued a pamphlet which shows through the use of a series of pictures the difficulty which anyone who has defective vision experiences in seeing letters or other objects. The pamphlet is a most effective device for convincing teachers and parents of the necessity of attention to pupils' eyesight.

It is accompanied by a circular letter emphasizing the importance of measuring eyesight. One paragraph of this letter is as follows:

In a careful examination of ten thousand industrial and commercial workers, active in their work and supposedly in good condition, 53 per cent showed defective vision uncorrected. It is an absolute fact that many employees are accused of inefficiency and carelessness when it is entirely a matter of imperfect vision.

#### JUDGE BOYD'S RULING ON CHILD LABOR

The National Child Labor Committee has collected the comments of a number of the leading newspapers of the country on the recent decision of Judge Boyd adverse to the federal child-labor law. The summary of the comments is as follows:

The *Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Journal* says of the decision: "The second attempt of the federal government to regulate children's labor has been held unconstitutional by the same judge who declared the first law invalid and was later sustained by the Supreme Court. This is disappointing to all persons who believe that a child has the right to develop physically and mentally and morally so that he may have a reasonably fair chance in life. It is a check to all who put the child above the dollar mark. . . . North Carolina may be proud of a judge whose interpretation of the Constitution has been upheld by the Supreme Court, but North Carolina cannot be proud that the child-labor law has for a second time been questioned and defeated within her boundaries. The best minds in North Carolina will not be flattered that it is now possible to overwork young children in their state. If there is statesmanship there, it has yielded to the more powerful dollar."

Judge Boyd finds a staunch supporter of this decision in the *Charleston (West Virginia) Mail* but even that paper does not go so far as to express its unqualified approval of the employment of children in cotton mills. "If child labor is wrong, then it ought to be prohibited, and not taxed," is its conclusion, and it adds: "Also, it would appear, if Congress cannot enact a child-labor law, which is a function of a state, it can hardly legislate in other ways nationally on a matter which is purely a state function."

The *Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch* takes a similar view when it says: "As inhumane as child-labor conditions in the South's cotton mills admittedly have been in the past, as regrettable as they may be now, it is not within the constitutional province of Congress to undertake their regulation, either by direct usurpation of the state's police power and control of its own labor, or indirectly through the masquerade of a federal tax. While the object is laudable and humanitarian in intent, the federal law which attempted to levy a tax of 10 per cent on the product of child labor is not the correct angle from which to approach the problem. . . . It [Congress] stands rebuked by

Judge Boyd for seeking to exercise the power forbidden to it under the thin guise of taxation."

The *Bristol* (Virginia) *Herald Courier*—although from its location it might be supposed to have strong sympathy with the southern viewpoint—plainly shows the advantages of federal over state regulation of child labor. "Humanity called for the enactment of such a law," is its comment, "so that children of tender years might have their days in which to play and grow and acquire the rudiments of an education. Whenever such an enactment was proposed by the legislature of any state, in the South especially, the mill men of the state would hurry to the capital to protect and to urge with all the influence in their power that it would mean their ruin, unless a similar law were enacted in states with like manufactories. This method was successful, until its proponents brought the matter up in Congress, and then their winning argument was gone, for the law applied to all states alike.

"Undoubtedly the present law may be cured by amendment wherever it conflicts with the fundamental law of the land, . . . . and children everywhere in this country will be protected from industrial slavery and no longer be coined into unholy profit for rapacious manufacturers."

The *New York Evening World* says concerning the decision: "Sooner or later this Nation will have a federal child-labor law, Judge Boyd and the southern cotton-mill owners notwithstanding. A way will be found to make an almost unanimous public opinion effective. . . . Judge Boyd and his legalistic quibbles may delay but cannot defeat a law which will end child slavery."

This view is shared by the *Asheville* (North Carolina) *Citizen*, which reminds its readers that "the states have shown no disposition to face the child-labor issue, as North Carolinians well know by the fate of the Weaver Bill, defeated in General Assembly several years ago. If the states persist in this attitude toward children as laborers Congress will at last write a constitutional law giving them protection."

The *New York Tribune* sees no good reason "for those who would heed the bitter cry of the children to feel discouraged" and thinks that when the question is passed upon by the Supreme Court "it is not unlikely that the law will be upheld." "Judge Boyd," the *Tribune* says, "may be rated a bit doctrinaire in his solicitude for state rights, while the Supreme Court, as now constituted, leans to the national point of view. Moreover, the influences of North Carolina, which has been allous to the child-labor question, have surrounded Judge Boyd, whereas the atmosphere about the Supreme Court is more liberal."

The *Buffalo* (New York) *Enquirer* says that "the sentiment for federal prevention of the exploitation of children is not to be denied. If there is no way under the Constitution as it stands, the Constitution can be amended. The Constitution was amended to make income taxation legal, to establish woman suffrage and prohibition. If it must be, it shall be amended to prevent putting children to oppressive labor in industry. That is better reason for amendment than any of the others."

## FOR TEACHERS IN SERVICE

The State Normal School at East Radford, Virginia, is rendering a type of service to the schools in its environment which gives encouraging evidence of a growth of professional spirit. Too often normal schools have been content to give initial training to the inexperienced young people who are preparing to teach, but have felt no responsibility for teachers in service. The normal school has operated within its own walls and has often failed to reach out and exercise that influence which the training of its staff and its official relation to the state school system dictate that it cultivate.

The normal school at East Radford is issuing a series of bulletins which will help teachers to keep up their studies after graduation. One of these bulletins contains a series of reading references. Another is a score card which can be used in rating a recitation or can be used by a teacher in deciding what characteristics of his or her own efforts need more emphasis than is now being given.

With these bulletins, which can be secured from the school, is a mimeographed page of suggestions on excellences and errors in teaching which is worth quoting in full because it is helpful in bringing to explicit recognition principles of teaching which are often thought of only vaguely. This list is as follows:

## TEACHING EXCELLENCE

1. Careful daily preparation
2. Being sure of your facts
3. Independence of textbooks
4. Careful assignments
5. Purposefulness of the recitation
6. The use of supplementary material
7. Careful organization of subject-matter
8. A proper use of books
9. A proper use of course of study
10. Provision for seat work
11. Careful introduction to recitation
12. Large use of showing method
13. Keeping all the class busy
14. Proper class movement

## TEACHING ERRORS

1. The "and" habit
2. Little tacked-on questions
3. Letting all the children speak at once
4. The teacher's telling too much
5. Questioning only a few pupils
6. Waiting too long for an answer
7. Wandering from the main idea
8. Disputing with children
9. Not teaching children how to study
10. Assigning too much home work
11. Indefinite assignment of home recitation work
12. Requiring too much written work

15. Holding the whole class responsible
16. Spreading the questions over the whole class
17. Much class work with open books
18. Keeping notebooks and scrapbooks
19. Correlation of subjects
20. Children's use of complete sentences
21. Children's use of consecutive discourse
22. Large use of blackboard
23. Discussion by the pupils
24. Careful wording of generalizations
25. Memorizing by the whole method
26. Provision for practice
27. Provision for review
28. Attention to pupils' individuality
29. Ownership of textbooks
13. Not holding children responsible for assignment
14. Running over time in recitations
15. Failing to review
16. Indefiniteness in teaching
17. Questioning only the bright pupils
18. Confusing application with generalization
19. The use of "yes" and "no" questions unless followed up
20. Not having supplementary materials ready
21. Too many small questions
22. Interrupting pupils in reciting
23. Exemptions from reviews and examinations

#### CIVICS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The superintendent of schools of Omaha has issued a mimeographed bibliography and outline of a course in civics to be followed in the elementary school. The pages introductory to the lists of books and topics to be treated are so clear and suggestive that they may properly be quoted in full. They are as follows:

It is said that "a nation is safe for democracy only when it is composed of citizens who think seriously and intelligently, and who act on their convictions." It is becoming more and more evident to thinking people each year that training is demanded of those who wish to share intelligently in the conduct of affairs. Therefore, it follows that training in some vital sort of civics or citizenship should have a definite place in all elementary-school curricula, for the boys and girls in school constitute the source from which an intelligent citizenship must be developed.

"The old order changeth." Until recently the usual concept of the subject of civics was the explanation of the details of governmental organization. The new concept is the making of citizens. It is possible to teach children that one may be as truly a good citizen in the home or in the school as elsewhere; that the boy or girl who is a good citizen and respects the rights of others in the home or at school or on the street is the one who will respect the rights of others when grown up.

The aim of this course of study is to emphasize citizenship and to develop and promote an "emotion for good citizenship" which will function in the life of the individual. This aim and the general approach and method of treatment are in line with the recommendations of the various committees on social studies. The relation of the pupil to Omaha, the county, state, and national government should be stressed throughout the course.

Through careful reading, intelligent questions, and the study of problems, the pupils should be placed in touch with various phases of community life. The welfare of the community ought to be the central thought of every assignment, of every lesson. For this reason the pupil is introduced first of all to his own community and its immediate problems. This gives him a background for his later study of the larger units of state and nation.

The teacher herself must be thoroughly alive to her responsibilities as a citizen and it is necessary that she keep in touch with the civic activities of her own community. Otherwise her teaching will become formal and stilted. She should inculcate in her class not only the ideals of good citizenship but also the habits of good citizenship.

#### REFERENCE MATERIAL

(This is merely suggestive to the teacher)

*Bulletin board.*—This may be used to display clippings, pamphlets, reports, pictures, and other material related to the topic under discussion.

*Reports, bulletins, etc.*—Copies of pamphlet laws, ordinances, reports, and placards of both public and private organizations.

*Pictures and lantern slides.*—Buildings of local interest, such as hospitals, charitable institutions, etc., state capitol and the national capitol at Washington.

*Plans and charts.*—Present or proposed public works, such as widening of streets, new state capitol, etc.

*Maps.*—Maps of the city showing industrial centers, business districts, transportation lines, voting precincts, school districts, public buildings, parks, etc. Maps of county, state, and nation.

*Samples and models.*—Samples of paving, of water at different stages of filtration, adulterated food, coke, etc.

#### HOW TO SECURE THE MATERIAL

The growth of a civics laboratory or a classroom reference library is a slow process and depends largely upon the initiative of the teacher and the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils.

The various government departments and bureaus—city, county, state, and national—can furnish free of charge or for a nominal sum, not only documents but plans and pictures.

## SYSTEMATIZING DRILL

It is quite possible to waste much time in drill exercises which are not well directed. Last year Miss Myrtle L. Kaufmann, elementary supervisor, Logansport, Indiana, at that time supervisor of the primary grades of Springfield, Illinois, with the co-operation of Miss De Lano, prepared for the use of the primary teachers of that city a list of words with numerical notations intended to reduce and, if possible, eliminate such waste. Her introductory statement prefacing the list is as follows:

For the sake of efficiency in drill the most important thing for any teacher to know is where the emphasis should be placed. It is a fact that no word is taught once for all time. Before a word can be really known it must be met in context a sufficient number of times to become fixed. Hence, time spent upon words which are not frequently recurring is largely wasted.

This study has been made for the purpose of ascertaining which words should be emphasized by teachers using the *Winston Primer* and *First Reader* and, further, to ascertain the classes in which these words may be drilled upon most economically.

The words which this study has led us to check should be studied to the point of mastery. That is, they should be recognized at any time and in any place in which they are found. Other words may be taught for use during the reading of the stories in which they appear, but need not be reviewed and drilled upon to the point of mastery.

The list covers twenty-six mimeographed pages and can be described by reference to several concrete examples. Thus, the word "away" appears fifteen times in the primer and thirty-two times in the first reader; it should be emphasized in drill in the earliest instruction. The word "ate" occurs three times in the primer and eighteen times in the first reader. Drill on this word can accordingly be postponed to the period of study of the first reader. The word "alive" is found only once in the primer and once in the first reader. It is, therefore, not to be stressed at all. In some few cases a word appears frequently, but only in one story. This is true of the word "bear" which appears twenty-three times in the primer and not at all in the first reader.

Information of the type which such a list of words supplies is valuable, not only because it serves as a guide in the teaching of

words, but also because it can be used as a device to attract the attention of teachers and lead them to think about the meaning of drill in all the subjects with which they have to deal. Teachers who really grasp the meaning of such a list of words will demand some guide of a similar type in other subjects. They will ultimately be rescued from that kind of formal effort of which conscientious teachers are sometimes guilty when they emphasize equally the unimportant and the important, the common and the exceptional.

In order to avoid another type of formalism in word-study equally as undesirable as indiscriminate drill, Miss Kaufmann adds to the list a concluding statement which should perhaps be quoted in order to make clear the spirit and outlook of the study which the list reports. This final statement is as follows:

It should not be implied that because we offer this study in words that we discount the importance of phrase study and the use of phrase cards. In fact, we hold that the phrase should be emphasized, especially in the primer. But the frequency with which words occur may be a guide in the selection of the more important phrases. Also, we hold that with normal classes the study of the isolated word should follow rather than precede the phrase study.

Furthermore, we hold that no primer or reader should be built from a limited vocabulary. Such procedure robs the stories of reality, sincerity, and quality. Consequently, we must expect a content primer or reader to contain some words occurring but a few times. Such words are easily absorbed in phrases or recognized from context. Hence, the fact that a word appears but once is no indication that it necessarily offers difficulty when it is met. Then, too, some words are so easily recognized that, though peculiar to a story, they offer less difficulty than others more commonly used. For example, the word "Gingerbread" occurs thirty times in the *Winston Primer*, and in only the one story. Yet, it offers no difficulty to children.

Finally, we may say that such a study as this should be made for all basal primers and first readers. Also, this and other such studies should be followed by a similar study of phrases.